

The Fatima Devotion

In the spring of 1916, as the First World War was raging, an angel appeared to three small shepherd children in a small village in Portugal, at the Loca do Cabeco as they tended sheep. Lucy de Santos, then aged 10, was accompanied by her two cousins Jacinta, aged 7, and Francisco Marto, also aged 10, all three from a very poor, Portuguese, peasant family.

The shepherd children saw the vision of an Angel of Peace whose mission was to prepare them for the Coming of the Virgin Mary, by appearing three times. For each of these Apparitions, the angel invited the children to pray and accompanied them in their reverence. During the summer, when the angel appeared a second time to the children who were playing, he urged them to pray. "Constantly offer prayers and sacrifices to the Most High", he said. He presented himself as the guardian angel of Portugal.

The following year was the start of a long series of events. There were in fact 6 Apparitions of the Virgin Mary between May 13th 1917 and October 13th of the same year:

May 13, 1917:

On her first Apparition, the Virgin Mary appeared to the 3 shepherd children dressed in white and asked them to come at the same time every 13th of the month for six months. She then added, "recite the rosary every day to obtain peace in the world and the end of the war".

June 13, 1917:

The following month, the children, accompanied by several hundred faithful, went to the appointment. After the collective prayer, the Virgin Mary appeared again and announced to Lucy: "I will soon take Francisco and Jacinta to heaven, but you will remain here for some time. Jesus wants to use you to make me known and loved". She then asked the young Lucy to learn to read and write to spread her word amongst mankind.

July 13, 1917:

On Friday, July 13th, the Virgin Mary appeared before Lucy and her cousins as on the other occasions. 4,000 people were at this event, even though they "saw" nothing themselves (as Lucy was the only one to see the woman in white, the faithful could only observe strange occurrences such as flashes, a halo of light, etc.). As with every Apparition, she addressed Lucy: "I want you to continue to say your rosary every day in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary to obtain the end of the war and peace in the world". During this Apparition, the Virgin Mary also announced 3 new prophecies that were to be kept secret by Lucy for some time. Two of these secrets were disclosed in 1942, the third in 2000.

August 13, 1917:

On Monday August 13th, some 18,000 people went to the meeting place and saw some of the phenomena encountered at the previous Apparitions such as thunder, lightening, a halo of white light...but Lucy was not there and so the Apparition did not occur. The administrator of the canton had locked up Lucy and her two cousins, claiming that they were a disturbance to public order. He in fact wanted to know the secrets that the Virgin Mary had revealed to the children, even going so far as to threaten them with death to get them to talk, but in vain. Imprisoned for 2 days, they kept their secret and the administrator reluctantly released them.

It was therefore on Sunday 19th August that the Virgin appeared to the children asking them to continue to pray and promising them that at her last Apparition, she would accomplish a Miracle "to make everyone believe".

September 13, 1917:

During the 5th Apparition on September 13th, around 30,000 faithful bowed before the messengers of the Virgin Mary - Lucy, Jacinta, and Francisco - imploring their succour to heal the sick. It was at that moment that the Virgin Mary announced, for the following month, the coming of the Lord, of Our Lady of the Carmel, and of Saint Joseph with the infant Jesus.

October 13, 1917:

On October 13, 1917, the day of the last Apparition, it poured with rain on the Cova da Iria. Lucy asked the faithful to close their umbrellas to recite the rosary together and observe the arrival of the Holy Virgin. The Virgin Mary presented herself to Lucy as Our Lady of the Rosary and asked her to build a chapel in her honour. She announced that the war was going to end and asked Lucy to "heal several of the sick and convert sinners". The Virgin Mary then raised her eyes to heaven, the rain stopped and the sun shone brightly, radiating different coloured beams of lights, and dancing around the sky. The crowd cried out in terror but after a few moments, everything returned to normal.

The Virgin Mary then disappeared into the firmament, reappeared a few moments later, under the amazed eyes of 3 shepherd children, accompanied by Saint Joseph, the Infant Jesus and Our Lord blessing the world using the sign of the cross.

During her many apparitions, the Virgin Mary predicted Jacinta's and Francisco's death by the Spanish Influenza epidemic was predicted, and Lucy's entrance into the Carmelite Order with the mission of Spreading the Fatima message.

She also announced, what is recognized today by the church as the "3 Secrets of Fatima", written down for the Vatican by Sister Lucia in the 1940's because she thought she was dying, with the warning

not to release the Third until at least 1960. The secrets contained a terrible vision of Hell and a warning to pray for sinners lest they be damned, as well as a warning of coming chastisements against a sinful world unless reparation and penance was made. The secrets affirmed the end of the Great War but the start of a Second World War during the reign of Pius XI. They also warned of the arrival of Communist regimes with instructions on spiritually fighting the errors of Russia. The Third Secret was a symbolic vision of an angel shouting "Repent", the Church being persecuted, and a Bishop in White being apparently assassinated by gunfire at the foot of the Cross. This was officially interpreted as the announcement on the assassination attempt against the Pope in May 1981. This last secret was kept by the Vatican in a sealed envelope for a long time. This manuscript was only read in 2000 when Pope John Paul decided to make this revelation public. The Blessed Mother appeared again to Lucy, as announced, in 1925 revealing the devotional practices that were to be spread to save souls from the terrible fate revealed as a warning.

Francisco and Jacinta Marto died indeed die very early in 1919 and 1920 respectively. There were beatified by Pope John Paul II on May 13, 2000. Lucy Dos Santos took her vows in 1928 and received new apparitions from the Virgin Mary in 1925 and 1929. She wrote her story herself, the official version of the Apparitions of the Virgin of Fatima. She lived very old, and since 1946 lived at the Carmelite convent of Coimbra.

Fatima is now a world center of well-known pilgrimages. With Lourdes, it is one of the major sanctuaries dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Sister Lucia was told in apparitions of certain great sins against Mary's Immaculate Heart, and special devotions to be used in reparation for the sins of the world. These are described below:

The Five Great Sins Against Mary's Immaculate Heart

1. Blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception,
2. Blasphemies against her Perpetual Virginity,
3. Blasphemies against the Divine Maternity, thus refusing at the same time to accept her as the Mother of the Church and All Mankind,
4. People trying to publicly implant in the children's hearts indifference, contempt, and even hatred against the Immaculate Mother,
5. Insults against her directly in her Sacred Images.

Five Special Practices of Reparation Thereof

(Other than the expected amending of One's life and doing Penance)

All these acts, but especially those related to the first five Saturdays, must be done in the spirit of reparations for the offenses committed against the Immaculate Heart:

1. Daily Recitation of Five Decades of the Rosary

The same rosary that may be recited as part of obtaining the previously revealed benefits of wearing the Brown Scapular.

2. Wearing the Brown Scapular

Historically the second most popular Marian devotion after the Rosary.

3. Making the Five First Saturdays

-To focus your intent, pray something like this:

"Dearest Mary, I offer you the following act (say what it is: Confession, Communion, the Rosary or the Meditations) in reparation for all of the offences committed against your Immaculate Heart, as part of my first Saturday of the month devotion to you. Amen"

-Receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist on these same Five Consecutive First Saturdays.

-Receive the Sacrament of Penance within 8 days before or after receiving the Holy Eucharist on Five Consecutive First Saturdays.

-Say 5 decades of the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary especially on these same Five Consecutive First Saturdays, like everyday.

-Meditate for 15 minutes with Our Lady on all the mysteries of the Holy Rosary on these same Five Consecutive First Saturdays. This meditation is separate from the praying of the Rosary, it may be done in simple silent meditation, Scripture reading about the mysteries, in an actual praying of a Rosary separate from required 5 decades, or in any prayer of your choice. (A sermon of whatever length can take the place of this meditation on either one or all of these same Five Consecutive First Saturdays.)

4. Offering the sacrifices of daily life for the conversion of sinners

-Morning Offering of Daily Sacrifices. There are many Morning Offerings out there, all would suffice. This one is attributed to Fatima:

"O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys and sufferings, all that this day may bring, be they good or bad: for the love of God, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for all the sins committed against the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary."

-Specific Sacrifice Prayer to be said when one has a specific Sacrifice to offer God. There are many out there, all would suffice. This one is attributed to Fatima:

O Jesus, it is for love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

5. Personal Consecration to the Immaculate Heart, and a Public Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart by the Holy Father in union with the Catholic Bishops of the World

-Any formula may be used to consecrate oneself to the Mother of God, as long as it involves a total oblation of oneself. This is a good act personal of consecration:

“O Mary, Virgin most powerful and Mother of mercy, Queen of Heaven and Refuge of sinners, I consecrate myself to thine Immaculate Heart. I consecrate to thee my very being and my whole life; all that I have, all that I love, all that I am. To thee I give my body, my heart and my soul; to thee I give my home, my family, my country. I desire that all that is in me and around me may belong to thee, and may share in the benefits of thy motherly benediction. And that this act of consecration may be truly efficacious and lasting, I renew this day at thy feet the promises of my Baptism and my first Holy Communion and my Confirmation. I pledge myself to profess courageously and at all times the truths of our holy Faith, and to live as befits a Catholic who is duly submissive to all the directions of the Pope and the Bishops in communion with him. I pledge myself to keep the commandments of God and His Church, in particular to keep holy the Lord's Day. I likewise pledge myself to make the consoling practices of the Christian religion, and above all, Holy Communion, an integral part of my life, in so far as I shall be able so to do. Finally, I promise thee, O glorious Mother of God and loving Mother of men, to devote myself whole-heartedly to the service of thy blessed cult, in order to hasten and assure, through the sovereignty of thine Immaculate Heart, the coming of the kingdom of the Sacred Heart of thine adorable Son, in my own hearts and in those of all men, in my country and in all the world, as in heaven, so on earth. Amen.”

- Should be renewed often, especially on the First Saturdays. The different “renewal consecrations” may be different consecration prayers, many are out there. A good short renewal prayer of your act of consecration:

“O Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, the Angels, and the Most Holy Rosary, I renew my consecration to you and to your Immaculate Heart. Please accept me Mother of God, Mother of all mankind, and my own dear Mother, and use me as you wish to accomplish your, and your Holy Son's, designs upon the world. I am all yours, my Mother, my Queen, and all that I have is yours. Amen”

-The Public Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart in union with a moral totality of the World's Catholic Bishops was preformed by Pope John Paul II in 1984. Many fanatics, who take private revelation as public and follow the only letter of the law, say the consecration of Russia has not been done. Pay them no heed. The Vatican and Sister Lucia (the chief visionary) officially say it did in 1984. Just look what happened to Communism and the relative peace of the 1990's. Considering history at the time of the apparition, the Conversion mentioned of Russia was never specifically a religious one from Orthodoxy to Catholicism. It was probably the Socio-Economic

Political and Cultural Conversion from Communism. Especially considering John Paul II and his political links to the downfall of Communism, and his links to Fatima based on the date of his assassination and its similarity to the Third Secret. That is no coincidence. Some fanatics complain that the Pope didn't mention Russia by name in his Public consecration to the Immaculate Heart, only "the World". They say while this may have been helpful, it is not complete, and that it is thus in the class of previous consecration attempts by various Popes (one of which was said to have helped shorten WWII by Sister Lucia). Ignore these nitpickers. Although the Pope does seem to have in fact mentioned Russia quietly, Sister Lucia's objection was never that the Consecration didn't mention Russia specifically when Consecrations of the World were tried in the past anyway! The defect was always that not enough Bishops participated. However, she confirmed that a moral totality did in 1984, and she and the Vatican both official proclaimed the requested Fatima Public Consecration to have been completed at last.

Prayers Given at Fatima by Our Lady and the Angel of Peace

- "My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love Thee!"

I ask pardon of Thee for those who do not believe,
do not adore, do not hope and do not love Thee!"

- "O Most Holy Trinity, I adore Thee!

My God, my God, I love Thee
in the Most Blessed Sacrament!"

- "O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell.
Lead all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need."

- "Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I adore Thee profoundly. I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood, Body, Soul and Divinity of our Lord, Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles throughout the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges, and indifferences by which He Himself is offended. And through the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart, and those of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of thee the conversion of all poor sinners. Amen."